Adult Literacy Contact Centre NEWSLETTER

June 1992 Volume 5, Number 6

A project of the Adult Basic Education Association of B.C.

Boost from B.C. Broadcasters: Literacy Wins Humanity Award

The B.C. Literacy Public Awareness Campaign (LPAC) has been designated co-winner of the annual Humanity Award from the B.C. Association of Broadcasters (BCAB).

The award means that the campaign will receive free commercial airtime valued at approximately $700,000.00 on radio and television stations throughout B.C. The airtime will be used to broadcast a series of public service announcements (psa's) targeted at both potential learners and a general audience, on behalf of B.C.'s literacy community. The psa's are scheduled to air for six months from mid-June to mid-September 1992, and from mid-December 1992 through mid-March 1993.

The announcement of the award was made by BCAB President Bryan Edwards at the association's annual convention on May 22 in Penticton. The award was accepted on behalf of the LPAC by Linda Mitchell, a member of the LPAC Advisory Committee. The campaign shares the $1.4 million award with the (B.C.) Organ Donor Transplant Association.

The Humanity Award was established by the BCAB in 1980. It is presented annually to a non-profit organization in British Columbia "which provides service to people throughout the province and on whose behalf a broadcast public information campaign could, in some measurable fashion, have a positive impact on the people of British Columbia."

Previous winners of the award have been Big Brothers and Associated Big Sisters of B.C. (1991); the B.C. Special Olympics (1989); the University Hospital (1988); and the Rick Hansen Man in Motion World Tour (1987).

In 1990, the award sponsored a BCAB-initiated anti-racism campaign called "Racial Harmony."

The LPAC psa's were developed by Wasserman Cozens Dundon, in association with VRH Public Relations, a specialized arm of VRH Communications Ltd., the agency responsible for managing the LPAC.

Two television and six radio ads, each 30 seconds in length, have been produced.

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An example of one of the radio psa's targeted at potential learners, is one in which a woman's voice says:

17 years I worked there. I knew my job inside and out.

Then one day the boss walks in and drops this bombshell on my desk.

"It's the manual for our new computer," he says. "Read it."

Yeah, read it.

One of the TV psa's features a man who describes his apprehension over certain reading situations:

...Scared all the time. I'd go to work knowing that today they'd find out....My little girl holding a book of fairy tales —I'd just panic.

All of the psa's are tagged with the Adult Literacy Contact Centre toll-free telephone number (1-800-663-1293).

The psa's are expected to air concurrently on about 40 radio stations and on BCTV, CFJC, CFTK ,CHAN, CHEK, CKPG, CHBC, and UTV beginning approximately June 15.

The LPAC is a cost-shared project between the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology (MAETT) and the National Literacy Secretariat (NLS), Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada. Funds to produce the radio and TV psa's came from a one-time grant from the NLS.

Among the LPAC's objectives are:

❖ to raise public awareness of the problems associated with low literacy skills

❖ to encourage potential learners to seek assistance and to tell them how to get help by calling the Adult Literacy Contact Centre's toll-free telephone number

VRH Public Relations has prepared an information package — to be distributed to the literacy field in mid-June — to assist local agencies and groups with a potential increase in calls resulting from the psa's. The material includes information on the LPAC and the Humanity Award, as well as a guide to handling media requests for literacy information.

Additional copies of the package will be available from the Adult Literacy Contact Centre in mid-June.

For further information on the LPAC, contact any member of the advisory committee:

Chair: Betty Nobel
Vancouver Community College
(King Edward Campus)
Phone: 871-7008

Member: Linda Hackett
Adult Literacy Contact Centre
(Vancouver)
Phone: 684-0624
Toll-free: 1-800-663-1293

Member: Linda Mitchell
Literacy B.C. (Vancouver)
Phone: 687-5077 ❐

Plain Language as Law?

Most British Columbians would support a law that requires the use of plain language in government, legal and consumer documents, according to a recent survey commissioned by the Plain Language Institute of B.C. (See also story on page 3.)

The telephone survey, conducted by Campbell Goodell Consultants Ltd. of Vancouver, polled a representative sample of 602 B.C. residents during the last week of April, 1992. Among its findings were that:

• 90% of the respondents "agree strongly" or "agree somewhat" that "the government should pass a law requiring banks, insurance companies and others to write documents in plain, easy-to-understand language."

• 65% of the respondents "agree strongly" or "agree somewhat" that "the government should use tax dollars to enforce [such a law]."

The survey was conducted to determine whether legislation requiring plain language would be appropriate for British Columbia.

"Just Language" Conference in Vancouver

An international three-day conference planned for October, 1992 in Vancouver will explore the theory and practice of "plain language" in law, government and business.

"Just Language," sponsored by The Plain Language Institute (PLI) of B.C., will be held October 22-24 at the Pan Pacific Hotel. The event will feature a series of workshops and plenary sessions designed for people working in the legal system.

Subsidies will be available to non-profit organizations.

The PLI is a non-profit organization, founded in 1990, which works to promote the use of plain language in government, business and the legal community. It is funded by the B.C. Ministry of the Attorney General and the Law Foundation of B.C.

The major themes of the conference are to:

❖ explore the justice of legal language

❖ understand the needs and purposes of readers, and recognize the special needs of "marginalized" readers in particular

❖ investigate the processes and problems of communication for both readers and writers

❖ develop skills of working in plain language and clarify plain language theory and values

❖ examine how to implement plain language in the legal system, government, business and the community

Some of the workshop topics planned to date are:

❖ Plain Language Laws: Whose Interests are Served?

❖ The Public's Views of Legal Documents

❖ Language and Consumer Satisfaction

❖ Plain Language in Community Organizations

Six keynote speakers have been confirmed to date. They include:

❖ Mary Gusella, Deputy Minister, Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada (Topic: Why Language Matters in Justice)

❖ David Mellinkoff, Professor of Law Emeritus, University of California, Los Angeles (Topic: Plain Language: "Plain" to Whom?)

❖ Angus Reid, Chairman and CEO, The Angus Reid Group, Manitoba (Topic: Who's Reading? A Psychographic Analysis of Canada)

Conference presenters will be from England, Australia, and the U.S. (Texas, Michigan and Florida), as well as from Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario and Newfoundland.

The registration deadline for the conference is September 30, 1992.

For more conference information, contact:

The Plain Language Institute of British Columbia
c/o Suite 502 - 1155 West Georgia Street
Vancouver, B.C. V6E 4E6
Phone: 681-5701
Fax: 681-8601 ❐

Adult Literacy Contact Centre Newsletter

622 - 510 West Hastings Street
Vancouver, B.C. V6B 1L8
1-800-663-1293 Toll-free in B.C.
684-0624 Lower Mainland
684-8520 Facsimile

The Adult Literacy Contact Centre is a project of the Adult Basic Education Association of B.C. and is jointly funded by the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology; and the National Literacy Secretariat.

The Centre welcomes receiving your literacy news by phone, fax or mail. We reserve the right to edit written submissions for the newsletter.

The newsletter is published monthly and mailed during the first week of every month. It is available free of charge to any individual or agency upon request.

"Little Lotto" for ABEABC Members

The Adult Basic Education Association of B.C. (ABEABC) has announced a lottery to allow its members a chance to win funds to visit literacy programs in B.C. next fall.

The lottery, dubbed "Little Lotto," is open to instructors (or groups of students with an instructor) from colleges, school districts and community-based projects. The Association has $5,500 available to cover the costs of travel, accommodation, food replacement wages, and daycare costs, if necessary, for the winner.

The program is similar to last year's ABEABC Observation and Visitation Project, in which a team of nine literacy practitioners took part in a project aimed at observing program delivery in the province.

Lottery winners will be "drawn from a hat" on October 10, 1992. Depending on the projected budget of the first winner, two or three applicants may be able to share the available funds.

Jim Bray, ABEABC Regional Representative for the Cariboo/ Okanagan region, says the lottery is "open to ABEABC members from any literacy or ABE program at any level." To enter, he says, letters from applicants "should state which institution or program they represent, which program they wish to visit, and include a budget of projected costs." There is no limit to the number of individuals who may take part as a group.

Applicants must submit a letter of agreement from the program they wish to visit. All travel must be completed by December 31, 1992.

The winner(s) will be expected to provide a report on the visit to be published in *Groundwork*, the ABEABC journal published three times yearly.

The ABEABC is "a professional association which fosters and promotes excellence in adult basic education instruction and programming." Membership is open to teachers, administrators, and students of: basic literacy and adult basic education; Native education; and English as a second language; correctional institute, workplace and community-based programs; and GED, college prep and other similar programs.

To obtain an ABEABC membership application form, contact:

Terry Stephan
Adult Basic Education Department
Northwest Community College
606 Mountainview Square
Kitimat, B.C.
V8C 2N2
Phone: 632-4766
Fax: 632-5069

For further information on the lottery, contact:

Jim Bray
Developmental and Regional Programs
University College of the Cariboo
Box 3010
Kamloops, B.C.
V2C 5N3
Phone: 828-5284 or 828-5290
Fax: 371-5514 ❐

OUR OTHER SERVICES

As well as producing this newsletter, the Adult Literacy Contact Centre has services for all B.C.:

we give information and encouragement by phone to adults who want to know about adult basic education opportunities in their own community;

we provide literacy information to the non-profit and community-based sector, business, labour, the media, all levels of government and the public at large; and

we refer volunteer tutors to adult literacy programs.

Phone free from anywhere in B.C.

1-800-663-1293

"Loonie" Fundraising Event for Learning Disabled

Fifteen hundred "loonies" - Canadian $1 coins - is the grand prize at the first Adult Learning Disabilities Association (ALDA) "Loonie Lottery" to be held September 4, 1992.

The lottery is a fundraising event for ALDA, a nonprofit organization formed in 1987, which provides services such as: referrals for educational upgrading, employment and counselling; weekly support groups; networking; and information for the public.

Tickets - sold for $1 each - will be available daily from June 1 through August 31, 1992 at shopping malls and other locations throughout the Lower Mainland. In addition to the grand prize, the lottery includes draws for first, second and third prizes, as well as three "early bird" draws during July and August.

The sponsors of the event include the B.C. Federation of Labour.

Other prizes include the following:

Gift certificate ($250.00 value)
Canada Safeway Ltd.

Diamond and sapphire ring ($1,000.00 value)
Contoli Wholesale Jewellers

Casino package ($300.00 value) Great Canadian Casino Company

Accommodation and dinner for two ($150.00 value)
Holiday Inn, Vancouver Centre

Weekend for two ($350.00 value)
Hotel Vancouver

Return trip for two from Vancouver to Victoria ($150.00 value)
SeaLink Express

Sony Walkman ($100.00 value)
The Sony Store

Two-hour limousine service ($140.00 value)
Star Limousine

For more information, contact:

Adult Learning Disabilities Association
1322 - 510 West Hastings Street
Vancouver, B.C.
V6B 1L8
Phone: 683-5554
Fax: 683-2380 ❐

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Reaching Out: Libraries to Learners

A video training package to help library workers assist adult learners and new Canadians will be available for sale next month from a Calgary library.

Reaching Out: Communicating with New Canadians and Adult Learners is a 15-minute video of three case studies that "demonstrate ways in which library staff can improve communication skills while assisting adult learners in a sensitive manner." It was developed by the Calgary Public Library, with input from library staff and local agencies involved in adult literacy and English as a second language activities.

The package, intended as a training tool for library staff meetings and workshops, includes the video and printed support materials.

The video package is available at a cost of $25.00 from:

Attention: Amy Lo
Calgary Public Library
616 Macleod Trail S.E.
Calgary, Alberta
T2G 2M2
Phone: (403) 260-2622
Fax: (403) 237-5393 ❐

Calling all "Marks on Paper" Alumni...

Anyone involved in *Marks on Paper*, the student-acted play about literacy, which toured B.C. as a fundraising event during 1990, International Literacy Year, is asked to participate in a research project. Cynthia Andruske, adult basic education instructor at the University College of the Fraser Valley, and co-producer/co-director of the play from 1989-1992 (Literacy Players of Project Literacy Abbotsford-Matsqui) seeks input from former cast members, producers, directors and organizers of the play over its 13-year history (1979-1992). Andruske, a UBC Master's student, is writing a thesis on the history of the play and its application in learning environments. Contact:

Cynthia Andruske
Adult Basic Education Department
University College of the Fraser Valley
33844 King Road
R.R. #2
Abbotsford, B.C.
V2S 4N2

Phone: 853-7441 local 4319 (work) or 858-2590 (home)

e-mail: Cynthia_Andruske @ mtsg.ubc.ca

Funds Available for Braille Literacy Projects

The Canadian Braille Literacy Foundation has announced that funding is available to non-profit organizations for projects and programs that promote braille literacy.

The Foundation, funded through a "Challenge" grant from the National Literacy Secretariat, is administered by the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB). It "provides funding for projects and programs to promote braille literacy and to make braille publications and instruction more accessible to blind and visually impaired people."

Grants will be made only to registered non-profit organizations for activities to:

- ❖ promote public awareness
- ❖ research coordination and information sharing that foster awareness of braille
- ❖ develop braille literacy materials
- ❖ advance the use of braille to enhance access to information

The Foundation will provide initial financial support for projects for up to one year.

Application forms for 1993 must be submitted to the Foundation by June 30, 1992. Grant awards will be available in January, 1993.

For further information and to obtain an application form, contact:

National Director
Rehabilitation and Program Planning
The Canadian National Institute for the Blind
1931 Bayview Avenue
Toronto, Ontario
M4G 4C8
Phone: (416) 480-7590
Fax: (416) 480-7677 ❐

Message from the Contact Centre

The Adult Literacy Contact Centre Newsletter will not be published in July. Watch for the next issue, Volume 5, Number 7, in early August.